



Quarterly Report
NEPAL: CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 367-G-00-00097-00
July 1 to September 30, 2001

I. SUMMARY

Although many Nepalis had high expectations that democracy would bring prosperity and development to their country, some have come to realize that without an active and informed citizenry, democracy will be unresponsive to citizens' needs. The lack of confidence Nepalis feel about their political process is due, in part, to the majority's unfamiliarity with and lack of participation in their democratic institutions. Since 1994, NDI has been partaking in a broad national effort to increase Nepalis contribution to their governing bodies. In July 2000 and with funding from USAID, NDI began civic and voter education programs in Nepal. These programs intend to inform Nepalis about how their government and electoral systems work as well as encourage them to get involved in their political process.

During this quarter, the Institute conducted a variety of civic education related activities, including: 1) conducting teacher training workshops; 2) printing and distributing additional textbooks and teacher's guides; 3) holding a fifth civic education coordinating meeting; 4) meeting with the advisory board; 5) holding a book launching event; and 6) preparing for seven additional teacher training workshops.

Also during this quarter, the Institute conducted voter education activities including: 1) broadcasting radio shows; 2) holding district level forums; 3) distributing a resource manual and voter education booklet; 4) conducting an evaluation of the booklet; 5) revising and printing the resource manual and booklet; 6) conducting a training of trainer's workshop; and 7) planning to hold district and constituency level forums.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Civic Education

Nepalis receive little, if any, civics training in school. As a result, the adult population in Nepal often lacks the necessary foundation for becoming active and informed citizens in their democracy. To address this gap in the education system, key leaders in Nepal's education community have been working to introduce civics training in school curriculums. As a result of their initiative, many schools around the country are now offering an elective civic education course entitled *Contemporary Society*. Unfortunately, many of the classes do not have materials for the course nor are the teachers familiar enough with civics to effectively relay the lessons to students.

In response, NDI worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Higher Secondary Education Board, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), academics and local civic and political leaders to produce a civic education textbook and teacher's guide for use in the *Contemporary Society* course. The Institute is also conducting teacher-training workshops to inform teaching professionals and civic and political leaders about the contents of the new materials as well as how to effectively use these materials to relay civic messages to students.

Upon completion of the activities proposed in the grant agreement, approximately \$40,000 remained. The Institute drafted a memo and budget for USAID outlining add-on civic education activities. These activities include seven additional teacher-training workshops in four locations, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi, Bhairawa and Kathmandu, and will include participants from 35 neighboring districts. Approximately 35 teachers and principals are expected to attend each workshop, for a total of 245. With the remaining funds, NDI will also print 2,000 more Civics in Nepal textbooks and 500 teaching manuals for distribution throughout the country. The Institute, in collaboration with the American Center, will also hold a fifth coordinating meeting.

B. Voter Education

Although some materials about Nepal's election laws and polling practices have already been produced and distributed in the country, they continue to target highly educated citizens. Approximately 70 percent of Nepalis are illiterate, and thus many of the existing materials are inaccessible to an adequate number of voters. As a result, the majority of citizens know very little about how the electoral process works or what role citizens can play in ensuring credible and fair elections. In addition, the Election Commission recently established 30 district offices. However, the staff in these offices requires orientation regarding their responsibilities and the citizenry require information about the role of their district offices and how they can utilize these offices' services. Furthermore, many of the local civic and political leaders are unaware of their responsibilities during the polling process. These circumstances have led to violations in the Election Code of Conduct, which is intended to prevent voter intimidation, vote buying, illicit fundraising and spending and electioneering at the polling stations.

Throughout the previous year, NDI, in collaboration with the Election Commission and district election offices, conducted district level forums in 15 districts, bringing together 500 political and civic leaders, as well as district election officials. The Institute also conducted an extensive voter education program to increase citizens' awareness of and participation in the electoral process. The Institute's activities targeted the public, and included outreach to women and various ethnic groups, as well as district leaders involved in elections. Through material production and distribution, discussion forums and radio programs, NDI relayed messages about voters' right and responsibilities, election officials' duties, voter registration, the Election Code of Conduct and procedures for reporting election-related violations. The program also included general messages about the benefits of participating in the democratic process.

In July 2001, USAID provided NDI with a \$250,000 extension to conduct additional voter education activities. With this money, NDI will hold forums in 15 additional districts where the Election Commission has district offices. NDI will also hold workshops at the local level in five parliamentary constituencies in an effort to bring messages about voters' rights and responsibilities to more people.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Civic Education Program

Conducting Teacher Training Workshops

During this quarter and in cooperation with the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB), NDI conducted nine teacher-training workshops in Biratnagar, Lahan and Kathmandu. To prepare for the workshops, the HSEB assisted in selecting the training sites, drafting invitations and identifying workshop participants. NDI also hired logistics assistants in each of the three locations to help in delivering the invitations, confirming attendance, securing a caterer and fielding questions from participants.

NDI held workshops in Biratnagar from June 28 to July 5, in Lahan from July 14 to 19 and in Kathmandu from July 23 to 30. Approximately 35 teachers and principals attended each workshop and came from over 35 districts. The acting director of the curriculum department at the HSEB also attended many of the workshops to welcome participants and offer the HSEB's support for the program.

During each workshop, two trainers led participants through a variety of games and activities designed to increase their knowledge of the democratic process. Participants were given time to write and teach their own lesson plans and discuss the design of effective questions to ask in class. During the workshops, teachers and principals became more familiar with the Civics in Nepal textbook and teacher's guide and learned ways to teach the lessons within the books in an interesting way to students. NDI also distributed the textbook and teacher's guide to participants and had them fill-out a pre and post workshop questionnaire that NDI will use in its program evaluation.

Printing and Distributing Additional Textbooks and Teacher's Guides

To date, NDI has printed approximately 8,000 Civics in Nepal textbooks and 800 teachers guides. In addition to handing them out to participants at the workshops, the HSEB is distributing them to schools around the country. Principals and teachers come to the HSEB from around the nation to pick-up the books for their classes. So far, the HSEB has distributed 3,130 copies of the textbook and has requested that NDI supply them with more books.

Holding a Fifth Civic Education Coordinating Meeting

On July 18, 2001, NDI, in cooperation with the American Center, organized the fifth Civic Education Coordination meeting. The meeting brought together 30 INGO's, government agencies and local organizations working in the field of civics and education. It was designed to encourage donors to introduce civic lessons into their development projects and encourage government agencies to incorporate civics into their curriculum.

After participants introduced themselves, Society for the Promotion of Civic Education (SPCE) President Dr. Trailokya Nath Upraity and SPCE Secretary General Ramesh Prasad Guatam made presentations. They discussed the importance that civic education could play in consolidating democratic development in Nepal. They spoke of the need to introduce additional civics courses into all levels of school curriculum. Following the

presentations participants asked questions and discussed strategies for gaining additional support for civics programming in Nepal.

Meeting with the Advisory Board

NDI held a meeting with the Advisory Board, consisting of influential Nepalis in the education community, to seek their input on the program design and implementation. The Institute updated the advisors on the status of activities and discussed preparations for the Civics in Nepal book-launching event. The Advisory Board also advised NDI on where to conduct additional workshops and how to increase the numbers of schools who offer the *Contemporary Society* course.

Holding a Book Launching Event

The Institute assisted the SPCE in organizing a book-launching event to gain publicity for the new Civics in Nepal textbook and teacher's guide and demonstrate popular support for the *Contemporary Society* course. To prepare for this event, NDI assisted in drafting invitations and a program agenda and deciding the location. The Institute also prepared speeches for the United States Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Larry Dinger and USAID Director for the General Development Office Donna Stauffer.

The book launching was held on July 31 at 4:30 p.m. at Hotel Malla in Kathmandu. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Honorable Chetra Lekha Yadav hosted the event. Other speakers included: Former Speaker of the House Damannath Dhungana, United States Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Larry Dinger, USAID Director of the General Development Office Donna Stauffer, SPCE Secretary General Ramesh Prasad Gautam, Tribhuvan University Professor Dr. Shreeram Prasad Upadhyaya, HSEB Vice Chairman Dr. Narayan Kunwar, SPCE Executive Member Dr. Shree Krishna Yadav, Tribhuvan University Professor Dr. Mana Prasad Wagle and SPCE President Dr. Trailokya Nath Upraity.

Some speakers discussed the importance of civic education for the democratic development of Nepal. Others reviewed the contents of the Civics in Nepal textbook and mentioned that the current course should be the first step in introducing a more comprehensive civic education curriculum at all school levels in Nepal. A few speakers spoke of how civic education helped to shape them to become leaders in their countries, and many of the speakers thanked NDI, USAID and the United States Embassy for their efforts to promote civic education in Nepal.

Approximately 80 political leaders, teachers, principals, civic leaders and media representatives attended the launching. The event was broadcast on national television news that evening and written about in local papers the following day.

Preparing for Seven Additional Teacher-Training Workshops

NDI is now preparing to conduct seven additional teacher-training workshops in Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi, Bhairawa and Kathmandu. To prepare, NDI met with representatives of the HSEB to coordinate assistance in the drafting and distributing of invitations, selecting participants and schools and identifying training sites. NDI also hired a logistics coordinator

to assist in the implementation of the workshops and made arrangements with the same trainers who led previous workshops to continue training during the upcoming ones.

B. Voter Education Program

Broadcasting Radio Shows

The Institute continued broadcasting radio episodes of five-minute mini dramas throughout the country in Nepali and in nine local languages. The dramas began their broadcasts on May 5 from Radio Nepal's central and regional broadcasting centers and will end on October 7. At that time, 20 episodes in each language will have been aired, for a total of 1,000 minutes of airtime.

Holding District Level Forums

During this reporting period, NDI conducted district level forums in Banke, Surkhet and Palpa. The Institute organized the forums in collaboration with the Election Commission and the district election offices, which assisted in selecting venues, sending out invitations and identifying participants. More than 30 participants attended each forum.

In all the districts, participants included local level civic and political leaders, district and local government officials, the district election officer and the staff of the district election office. The District Chief Judge, the District Development Chair, the Chief District Officer and the Mayor were invited to attend the inaugural sessions and most attended. They highly praised the resource manual used during the forum. The forums were covered by national television and radio and featured in a number of national and local newspapers.

NDI achieved good balance from the major political parties at the forums, and this will continue to be an ongoing objective for the Institute during upcoming programs. Approximately 23% of participants were women.

Distributing a Resource Manual and Voter Education Booklet

NDI distributed a resource manual and voter education booklet to all forum participants. To date, the Institute printed and distributed 1,500 copies of the resource manual and 20,000 copies of the booklet. The Institute is distributing these booklets primarily through the Election Commission and district election offices but is also offering them to political and civic leaders for distribution where feasible. District Election Officers are distributing these booklets during the seminars organized by different NGOs in their respective districts.

On September 11, with the help of the Training Division of the Election Commission, the Institute distributed 60 copies of the resource manual and voter education booklet to students and teachers of the secondary schools of Kavrepalanchowk and Palpa districts. These students were in Kathmandu to participate in the 35-day training on the "Library Project for Strengthening Democracy". The students and teachers visited the Election Commission to get information on the electoral system in Nepal and to pick-up the Commission's publications. They highly praised the resource manual and booklet.

Conducting an Evaluation of the Booklet

NDI, in collaboration with district election officers, conducted an evaluation of the booklet in Lalitpur and Palpa districts on August 24 and 30, respectively. NDI formed two groups of more than twenty-five randomly selected citizens (incorporating men and women as well as individuals from different castes, classes, ethnicities and education levels). Each member of the group filled out a questionnaire before distributing the booklet and then after its distribution, to assess his/her level of understanding of the information imparted from the booklet. The institute is now compiling the data and preparing a report.

Revising and Printing the Resource Manual and Booklet

The Institute revised the resource manual and booklet used during its existing program to incorporate feedback received at NDI's 15 district level forums. NDI has printed 2,000 copies of the revised resource manual and 30,000 copies of the revised voter awareness booklet to be used during the extension of the program. These resource manuals and booklets will be distributed to the participants in 15 district and five constituency level forums.

Conducting a Training of Trainers' Workshop

In collaboration with the Election Commission, on September 27 and 28, the Institute held a training of trainers program. The training workshop prepared the Election Commission staff, district election officers and NGO leaders to serve as resource persons for the 15 district and five constituency level forums.

Resource persons from the Election Commission, 20 district election officers and five NGO leaders attended the workshop. Throughout the two days, attendees participated in a variety of activities to familiarize them with effective training skills and the written materials. A session was also devoted to logistical preparations.

Planning to Hold District and Constituency Level Forums

NDI is currently working on the logistical preparations for the upcoming district and constituency level forums. The first forum is scheduled for Sunsari on October 8-9.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: Increase Nepalis knowledge of their electoral system; and

Objective: Increase Nepalis awareness of the basic norms of democracy and their human rights.

The activities described in the previous section reaped significant results. The Institute:

A. Civic Education:

- Made available a civics textbook and teacher's guide for the *Contemporary Society* course. These resources will serve as effective teaching tools long into the future to

help inform young people about how their government works and how to solve local problems using the democratic process.

- Helped distribute the Civics in Nepal textbook and teaching manual to at least 3,130 students and teachers around the country. The HSEB houses additional copies of the books and is distributing them to various schools.
- Worked successfully to increase the number of schools offering the civics course. When NDI began the program approximately five schools offered *Contemporary Society* as an elective. More than 40 schools are now requesting books for the course and intending to offer it.
- Provided training to 400 teachers and principals on effective ways to use the new course materials.
- Garnered support, among principals, teachers, donors and civic and political leaders, for civic education programming in Nepali schools. Widespread support for civic education is apparent through articles printed in local newspapers calling for increased civics training for Nepali youth throughout the country, the formation of a local NGO with the primary goal of promoting civic education, comments made by local leaders and donors praising NDI's program and requesting additional civics materials to use in development projects and requests from teachers and principals for more Civics in Nepal textbooks and training manuals and additional training workshops.
- Permitted participating organizations to share information and discuss ways to cooperate on civics programming.
- Built strong relationships with local organizations and government agencies involved in civics and education.

B. Voter Education

- Encouraged the Election Commission to be more engaged in outreach work to educate Nepalis about elections.
- Enabled 20 radio dramas to be broadcast on a weekly basis throughout this reporting period.
- Printed and distributed 1,500 copies of the resource manual to participants during the forums.
- Printed and distributed, through district election offices, 20,000 copies of the voter awareness booklet to political party workers, school libraries, students and the public.
- Built strong relationships with Election Commission officials. District election offices are being strengthened, increasing their profile in their communities and building good relations with civic and political leaders in their respective districts.

- Completed the remaining three district forums in Banke, Surkhet and Palpa.
- Revised and printed 2,000 copies of the resource manual and 30,000 copies of the voter awareness booklet.

V. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

NDI's civic education program has been very successful. Through many meetings and the distribution of materials, NDI has helped to inspire interest and commitment among donors, government agencies and local NGOs for introducing civic education in formal and informal education throughout Nepal. There has been a great deal of positive feedback from Nepali academics, civic leaders, government representatives, teachers and principals on the usefulness of the civic education materials and the benefits of the teacher-training workshops. Schools are increasingly exposed *Contemporary Society*, which will lead to more students being introduced to civic education.

Simultaneously, by broadcasting radio shows and distributing voter awareness booklets, NDI is helping to increase the public's knowledge of the electoral system. NDI built close relationships with local level NGOs, political party leaders and district election officials during the implementation of the forums. District election offices are being strengthened, increasing their profile in their communities and building good relations with civic and political leaders.

IV. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

During the next quarter, NDI will continue to engage in civic and voter education activities. The Institute will conduct more teacher training workshops and print additional textbooks for distribution to students and teachers. NDI will also begin producing another cycle of radio shows and conducting discussion forums in 15 districts and 5 parliamentary constituencies.